

## Finding God. Finding Me. Book Sample

There have been times in my life – and I’m sure yours as well – when you’ve wondered where God was. You wonder why He didn’t save you from some misfortune or force a change in someone you loved in order for the relationship to work or simply to avoid a physical illness. Why didn’t God save me from this pain and suffering? Didn’t He tell me He’d take care of me? Wasn’t I His special child? Why did He leave me to suffer like this?

What I’ve come to learn is that it isn’t God’s job to save us. I’ve had many opportunities to see God in action. The only problem is that I usually saw it afterwards. As they say everyone has 20/20 hindsight vision. For most of my life, when God showed up, with the exception of a few times, it was a whisper or a ‘gut feeling’ or something so small that had I been paying attention, I would’ve known it was Him and possibly could’ve avoided many hurts and mishaps.

One of the more pronounced times of my life in which God was present was in the moments before a car accident I was in with my daughter in 2008. I had just dropped off my son at his religious education class and was on my way to bring my daughter to Girl Scouts. There was a little time in between the drop offs and on the way home I decided to run an errand. As I approached the road that led to the store, a very small voice said “Go home.”

Of course, I pushed it away because clearly running this errand would be beneficial. I traveled a bit further and again, I hear the voice. This time slightly louder. “Go Home.” I pondered this thought for a moment and in the seconds that followed, worked through the details of what I’d have to do if I went home and when I’d be able to run this small errand. I decided to push it away again.

The third time I heard the message, it was the loudest, “GO HOME.” One would think I’d put on my blinker and head home. Nope. I didn’t listen. I turned right and continued on the path to complete my errand. Minutes later - CRASH!

My car was hit and pushed over to the side of the road. I’ve no idea what happened and was completely disoriented. I smelled smoke. My body ached immediately from head to toe. The airbags deployed and I was trying to get out of the car. I turned to the back seat and saw my daughter, bundled up in her coat and strapped into her car seat.

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The contents of my purse were strewn all over the floor of the car and my only goal was to get out because I thought the car was on fire. I heard the right passenger door open and a voice speaking to me. “Stay in the car.” I replied, “But I smell smoke. The car is on fire. Is my daughter ok?” The voice said, “Stay in the car. There’s no fire. She is fine.”

I stayed put. Funny how I listened to THAT voice!

When the policeman arrived, I’m sure he spoke to me, but I have no recollection of what he said. I know that he checked on my daughter and I do remember him asking her if anything hurt and saying what a good girl she was for being in a car seat. As he helped me into the ambulance, I was unsteady, scared, disoriented, and crying. I called my ex-husband to come pick up my daughter as I tried to reassure her that I was ok.

As the ambulance sped off towards the hospital, I was still trying to piece the last few minutes of my life back together. The paramedics were asking me questions, but all I remember is that everything hurt and I felt nauseous. At the hospital, I remember calling a friend just to talk to someone who might be able to offer comfort. She didn’t pick up.

When I arrived home later that evening, full of cuts and bruises so painful I could barely walk into the door without assistance, I wondered why this happened to me. What had I done to deserve this? I had no answer.

It wasn’t until days or maybe weeks later when I remembered the voice. The voice that told me to go home. Not once. Not twice. But three times. Three times I was told to go home. I didn’t listen.

Where was God? He was right there. He already saw this accident happening. He knew the person would ignore the “no turn on red” sign and come barreling through the red light and hit me. He warned me, just as He had on my wedding day, but I didn’t listen. My errand was so much more important. I was right. He was wrong.

In a few moments, my life was changed. Had I listened and gone home, none of that would have happened. But I put my own selfish wants ahead of obeying God. He told me what to do – loud and clear but I chose to do what I wanted.

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You might say, “God could’ve saved you. He could’ve had that person go a different route.” You’d be right. He could’ve done many things, but He didn’t. There was a lesson for me to learn and He needed me to learn it. I think that’s how God works sometimes. He gives us opportunities to learn lessons the easy way but when we don’t ‘get it,’ He has to try something else.

I’ll give you another example – one that’s a little more light-hearted. I had just gotten my car detailed and was driving home. I left the windows open so the still damp interior could dry. As I pulled into my driveway and parked the car, I heard a little voice telling me to close the windows. Once again, it was repeated three times. And once again, I ignored it. (I know what you’re thinking. Really, Jen? Really?)

Later that afternoon, as my daughter and I headed out for an activity, I opened my driver side door to be greeted by....bird poop. Yep! Bird poop, all down the door, inside and out. Lovely. I shake my head, laugh a bit, and look up to the heavens. He got me again.

While I do think God has a great sense of humor, I also believe He uses a myriad of events and challenges to teach us important lessons. These happenings are wake-up calls that He sends out in an attempt to draw us closer to Him. Some require Superman-like strength and fortitude, others like my bird droppings lesson are gentle reminders that had we hearkened to His voice, we could avoid the many inconveniences of life.

It is in these times where God shows us that He cares about all aspects of our lives, not just the ‘big stuff.’ These confirmations of His presence have shown me that He knows me inside and out and wants me to trust Him in all things. That means not just the ‘hot messes’ of my life, but the cold messes too. Taking Him along with me as I traverse through my day ensures a smoother ride and when it’s not smooth, at least I know I have Him by my side to strengthen me. In short, God just wants us to be close to Him and He will use whatever means necessary to bring His kids back home where they belong.